

**Preventing Fraudulent Online Survey Responses**

**Study Team Tip Sheet**

This document describes best practices for avoiding fraudulent survey responses when administering a survey online. Often, fraudulent responses are related to the distribution of online incentives.

***For example,*** a researcher may notice a suspiciously large number of completed surveys or responses, or unusual email addresses that are inconsistent with might reasonably be expected for the survey. These activities may point to individuals who have compromised the survey and data, in an effort to access incentives for participation or meet other requirements.

***To prevent such incidents,*** investigators are encouraged to:

* use individual, one-time-use survey links
* retain IP addresses of individuals who complete the survey and incentive request

In this way, the researcher can both verify that respondents are in the United States and confirm that only one incentive is issued to each participant.

***Other recommended practices*** include:

* Removing links between IP addresses and survey responses once participants and their responses have been verified, *particularly when survey data are sensitive*.
* Include validation items in the survey to allow checks of the data for stronger quality control
* Require participants to provide a verifiable residential mailing address in the U.S. in order to receive an incentive payment. ***NOTE:*** *Data collection from participants who are physically located in the EEU will invoke the GDPR. Consult with your IRB staff liaison for more information.*
* Consult with your unit IT or Security Unit Liaison, or with University Information Assurance staff as a part of project planning.

Researchers are reminded to use [U-M Qualtrics](http://webservices.itcs.umich.edu/mediawiki/qualtrics/index.php/Help%3AContents) when doing surveys. Other resources for working with online surveys and maintaining survey and data security can be found at [U-M Safecomputing](https://safecomputing.umich.edu/)

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